2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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535 797 He was present with me in November 1936 at a big *ligubo* dance in the royal village of Maganga. It took place on the open space in front of the court-house. The Provincial Commissioner brought a party of Europeans to see it, and some members of a South African mission a few miles away were persuaded to come. Some of the missionaries before coming had been afraid that the dances and songs would be obscene, but when they saw the translations of the Ngoni songs which with Cibambo's help I had prepared, and watched the rhythm and dignity of the dances they were so favourably impressed that they asked the Paramount to send senior men to teach the songs and dances to the boys in the mission school.

535 At this *ligubo* dance contingents came from all over the central kingdom. The men came in groups based on the head villages of the chiefs and *alumuzana*, with young carriers bringing their war-dress fastened up in rolls of mats. They put on this war-dress in the neighbouring village of Lizulu, the *gogo* village from which Magonga had 'gone out', using the compounds of the huts belonging to the houses of the senior women for their robing. They climbed the steep path up to Maganga in companies, and near the Paramount's house they advanced in close formation with their shields held over their heads, while an official 'praiser' called out the *izibongo*, the praise names of the Paramount and his ancestors. On the open space in front of the court-house, the different detachments came together and formed a crescent facing the Paramount and his guests. The dance was chiefly a rhythmic stamping of the feet, with from time to time a slow movement of a few steps to the right and then to the left. A number of women of the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, including the Paramount's wife, danced in front of the warriors, facing them, carrying small sticks and small shields, and co-ordinating their steps with a rhythmic jerking of the right arm and neck, described by Cibambo as the women's dance in his account of warfare in old days. Every now and then one of the men leaped out in front, jumping high in the air, brandishing his spear and shield, and singing his own war song, the *ligiya*, the dance of the individual warrior. At intervals one of the official praisers came forward and sang the praise-songs of the Maseko line of Paramounts.

535 764 The *ligubo*, as a war-dance, could only be danced at the Paramount's village, or at the funeral of the Paramount or of his older sister by the same mother. In 1937 the older sister of the former Paramount Cikusi died, and the *ligubo* was danced during the mourning ceremonies which took place in the village of Mcakhatha.

During these funeral ceremonies the *ligubo* was danced continually from the moment when the corpse was wrapped in skins after death, until it was lowered into the grave three days later. *Ligubo*, the individual *ligiya*, and the songs of the army going out to war, went on all day and much of the night, and broke out with renewed vigour every time a

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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fresh detachment came into the village from another part of the country. The corpse was finally carried in a cow-skin from the hut to the grave between a double line of warriors singing *ligubo* songs and thundering with their shields knocking against their knees.

The only relics, therefore, of the military tradition which could be observed in the Ngoni kingdoms in the 1930's were related either to the national gatherings at the Paramount's village, or to the mourning ritual for the royal line. The knowledge of the songs and the war-dresses was preserved by the senior leading men and women of the trans-Zambesi clans. The songs which follow were sung, except for the last one, in both Ngoni kingdoms, and not only when *ligubo* dances took place. Some were sung at marriage ceremonies, and some formerly as *umsindo* songs at the pre-marriage rite for girls. In northern Ngoniland the last two songs were sung in the churches, and tunes of other well-known war songs were used in the churches of the Scottish mission with different words written for them. Most of the songs when translated sound very brief. They were less brief when sung in the Ngoni language since there was repetition of certain lines, with repeated refrains, and with a series of 'sounds' such as *inyo ho*, *xi*, *ye ye* which accompanied the stamping of feet and the clash of shields. These untranslatable 'sounds' were sometimes the only part of the song which was known by the younger men who had never used the Ngoni language, and they chanted them in the right places as a chorus.

The first four songs were all intended to encourage the warriors at the time of mobilization before going out on a campaign. They reminded the singers that in the use of the short stabbing spear the Ngoni armies were stronger than their enemies; that they brought their fighting skill from the south-east; that, though the fight might be long, rest would come in the evening; and that the army belonged to the Paramount, the head of the kingdom. The fifth song suggested the kind of warning given to warriors by the old men—that they should not give in after a fight, but pursue the enemy and capture their cattle. The sixth song, though the reference to Longiyeka was obscure, was said to be a warning against treachery and revolt in the army. The seventh song had three themes: that death was the lot of every man, and the earth where the grave would be dug was never satisfied (*ukunona* means 'to be satisfied'); that no one would escape the universal fate of death, from the senior men wearing the head-plumes to the common people and the cattle; and that the ancestors already buried in the land would be joined by those then alive. The terms used in this song to describe the social groups among the Ngoni people were those which will occur throughout this book.

1. No Paramount can be poor because of the spear.
   Then why are you running away?

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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ancestor cult in the head village of their clan. If they were asked 'How do you address the spirit (*teta idloni*)?' they gave the names and genealogy of the former heads of the clan and their attributes if they were known. If they were asked 'Where do you address the spirits?' the reply was always in terms of a particular village where a certain spirit was guarded.

The occasions on which the Swazi clan ancestors were addressed and sacrifices made were in cases of sickness of an important member of the clan. It was sometimes suggested that there might be trouble in the clan villages for which prayer should be made to the clan spirits, but when pressed the only specific instance informants could give was when the cattle did not thrive. They repudiated immediately any idea of prayer to the clan spirits in cases of drought or epidemics in the clan villages since those troubles, wherever they occurred, could only be helped by the spirits of the Paramounts who were concerned with all the land and all its people.

The procedure followed in the clan head village was the same as that for addressing the spirits of the Paramounts. In that village a diviner was consulted, he named the spirit who should be addressed, a beast was sacrificed and prayers were made. This was the Ngoni pattern of the ancestor cult, and it was limited to the Swazi and some of the trans-Zambesi clans. Its correct observance required that combination of cattle, houses, and known genealogies which only the leading clans possessed.

The living and the dead

At times such as funerals, and when talking about the ancestor cult, the Ngoni often used the phrase: 'Death cannot cut life.' They believed that human spirits had a continued existence after death, and that this existence was related to the place where they had dwelt, the people who were of their family and clan, and the cattle which belonged to their house and village. This continued association was not an automatic process. It had to be assured by the correct performance of the burial rites, the observance of stages of mourning and the deliberate 'bringing back' of the spirit to the village where it would be guarded and honoured after the final mourning ceremony was over.

In the Ngoni funeral rites there were distinctive elements in the burial of those belonging to Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans. In handling the corpse the legs were bent and drawn up to the body and the arms folded and crossed each side of the neck, so that the corpse seemed to be sitting and holding its head in its hands. It was wrapped in the skin of a newly killed beast. In the central kingdom men and women of Swazi clans were wrapped first in a sheep-skin, with a cow-skin put over it. The grave was a circular pit, with a small side chamber or shelf where the body was placed in a sitting position, propped up with large stones and facing south-east to the ancestral homeland. Personal possessions, such as skins and shields and baskets, were either put in the grave or taken to be

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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764 184 burned immediately after the burial on the banks of the stream where the living performed their ritual washing. Small children who were related to the dead took charcoal in their hands, and walked up to the grave backwards and threw the charcoal in without looking. Some leaders of the Swazi clans were buried on the edge of the kraal of the house to which they belonged, and the fence was enlarged to include the grave. The Ngoni comment on this place of burial was: 'If we make a grave, we make it outside the kraal, and afterwards build the kraal round that place so that cattle may walk over it and lie on it. Thus it may become flat as if it were nothing, for Ngoni people do not want a grave to [765] be seen from the outside.' The women who were near relatives of the dead were allowed to mourn in the hut where the person had died, or they could if they chose take part in the war-songs and dances which were the only form of mourning allowed to the male relatives and to the men and women of the village who were not closely related to the dead person. The usual procedure was for a group of older women to wail and sob in the hut, but for all the rest, men and women, to mourn in the Ngoni way by taking part in war-dances and songs.

764 182 Much of this ritual appears to have had as its purpose to remove the fear of death from the living. That was the explanation of why the children threw charcoal in the grave—that they should not remember with fear the dead person being put in the earth. The obliteration of the grave site on the edge of the kraal had a dual purpose. One has been already referred to—that the grave should not be seen. The other was to identify the grave of a leading man or woman with the kraal site and the cattle herded there. If the village moved and a new kraal was set up, people would still say 'X was buried here', adding 'He was buried here when we were on Domwe—or in Songea', referring to an earlier site of the village. Placing the corpse facing south-east, and singing Ngoni war-songs which had come from the south, linked the newly dead with the ancestral dead, and emphasized the chain of communication between the living and the dead, which a new ancestral spirit could help to forge. It was establishing this means of communication which was the dominant note in the ritual of the funeral and in the post-burial rites.

When a death took place, the first action taken after the corpse had been prepared and wrapped in a skin was to send out a summons to come and mourn. We saw in the chapter on the Paramount that at his death the summons was in the formula 'The skies have fallen.' For others the announcement was: 'So and so has died. Come and mourn.' The [765] obligation to mourn was binding. If relatives and fellow clansmen could not come at the time of the burial, or were away in the south, one of their first duties on returning to their home village was to go and mourn by the kraal where the dead person was buried. This was intended partly to show sympathy for the bereaved, but also to acknowledge and salute a new ancestral spirit, and to demonstrate the re-integration of

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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the group of those living relatives who had performed or were about to perform certain rites for the newly dead.

These rites were the stages of mourning laid down in the Ngoni funeral ritual. They were stages in which all adults took part, and they fulfilled the need to build up the future links with the spirit who had joined the ancestors and to bring together in common acts those from whom death had removed one of their number. The following text by one of the leaders of a Swazi clan in the central kingdom puts together briefly the successive stages of shaving, drinking beer, eating meat, singing war-songs, ritual cleansing and widow inheritance, and bringing back the spirit.

« If a man died, the second day they shave; after 5 or 6 months they shave again and cook beer. This means the widows must take off their white *xitambo* (head bands). After 12 months they take off their black *xitambo* and kill a beast to praise the spirit so that he may return to his house. This is also the time for inheriting the widows.

When they take off the white *xitambo*, the brother of the one who died takes sheep dung and sprinkles it in the houses where the widows are sleeping. At the same time the men wash their hands with cattle dung. The meaning of this is to tell the widows to cook food for the brothers of the dead man to send to them when they sit by the kraal. This they do before they can see them.

From the ritual witnessed at many funeral ceremonies, which never altered in its main elements, and from discussions with Ngoni informants, it was possible to gain some idea of Ngoni beliefs about the relation between the living and the dead. It was clear that the attitude of the living towards the dead was one of respect and honour, but not predominantly one of avoidance and fear as among some of the neighbouring tribes. The post-burial ritual culminated in 'bringing back the spirit' to the village, and we shall examine this further in the last chapter of this section. An observer was always conscious of a sense that people were waiting for the return of the spirit, which had to be planned for and carried out by the living. During the interval between the death and bringing back the spirit, it was said to be 'in the bush'. When asked where in fact the spirit was, the answer was always 'We do not know. How can we know?' They admitted that the life of the spirits was unknown to them, and there was evidence of a slightly uneasy relationship during this interval of waiting. When the spirit had been brought back and was being guarded by some woman appointed for that purpose, then it was once more near to the living and their cattle, and it could be addressed correctly. In the absence of any clear concepts about life in a spirit world, the Ngoni clung to the ritual by which they believed they could establish and maintain contact of a safe and respectful nature between the living and the dead.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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178 769 764 In the central kingdom there were two instances of a modern adaptation of the ancestor cult, both of which were evidence of its close links with the aristocratic tradition; one related to a *mukwazana* of a Swazi clan, the other to the royal clan. One of the first things which caught the eye of a visitor to the village of Mcakhatha was a large circular brick and cement tomb with a wooden cross on the top, in the middle of the village by the main kraal and within sight of the ruling chief's hut. It was the tomb of Njolomole Nzunga I, son of Golosela Nzunga who gave the cattle for NaMlangeni's *lobola*, and father of the ruling Chief Njolomole Nzunga II. The idea of this memorial originated with Lopati Nzunga, younger brother of Njolomole I and head of the *gugo* section of the village, and he had organized its erection. The bricks and cement were given by Europeans in the neighbourhood, and three beasts were killed for meat for those who carried the materials. The money to pay for the bricklayers' wages was raised by the sale of another beast. The name on the wooden cross was cut by the Chief's brother-in-law who was a carpenter, and Lopati said that the cross was for writing the name on and had no Christian significance. The tomb was declared 'open' to the public in the presence of a large number of people. A beast was presented to the Paramount Chief, and another beast was killed and cooked for a feast in the village. Beer was brewed in the huts of the two leading widows who had been in the big house and second house of Njolomole I.

This tomb was a memorial and not a grave, for Njolomole I had been buried in Ngoni fashion on the edge of the kraal, the fence of which was enlarged to take in the grave. It was regarded as a central point in the village. Ngoni visitors saluted it as they went by with the right arm upraised in Ngoni fashion, and war-dances and *ngoma* dances took place beside it. The idea of a brick tomb with a cross on top was of course a modern concept taken from European cemeteries in Nyasaland which Lopati had seen. It cost six cattle to put it up and 'open' it, and these cattle were taken from the herds of the big house of Njolomole I.

[576 201]

In the chapter on the Paramount (Part II, Chapter II) it was pointed out that in the central kingdom the Paramount Gomani I was shot as a result of the 'war with the English' when he refused to walk to Zomba for his trial. On the Zomba road near the turning to the mission station of Dombole was a track leading into some woods. In an open clearing was a brick and cement tomb to Gomani I, subscribed to by the central Ngoni (including those living in the towns of Blantyre and Zomba). A memorial fund called 'The late Gomani Memorial Fund' was opened in 1926, and three years later those who had organized the fund formed the Angoni Highlands Association, mainly of Ngoni working in Blantyre and Zomba and wishing to maintain their links with their home villages. In discussing the origin of this fund for the memorial informants pointed out that they were aware that Gomani I, unlike his father and grand-

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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father, had been a fierce ruler, and had gathered round him bands of young men who were not easily restrained. Though they could judge his character in this objective way, they respected his office, and hence his death and the confiscation of cattle which followed were a deep injury to Ngoni pride. So thirty years after his death they collected money and put up the memorial, and the appeal was supported for three main reasons. One was to commemorate this Paramount who had not had the traditional cremation by a river; another was to remove the shame of his death; the last was to draw together all his people in a common act. Every year numbers of Ngoni gathered at this memorial and held a Christian service which was followed by a general meeting. This memorial service and meeting had a definite link with the ancestor cult, and illustrated in a particular form Ngoni beliefs in the relation of the living and the dead.

In the 1930's, as we saw in Chapter III of Part I, the form of Ngoni funerals and the ritual of mourning were closely related to the ancestor cult and were practised by the Ngoni aristocracy. These forms of ritual and their beliefs they brought with them from the south, and they were an important part of Ngoni culture. We shall see in a later chapter how some of these cultural elements were combined with Christian ritual, both for leading individuals of Swazi clans and for lesser members of those clans.

CHAPTER II

CATTLE AND THE ANCESTOR CULT

THERE are many references throughout this study to the importance of cattle among the Ngoni. In this chapter the place of cattle in Ngoni life will be examined with reference to the ancestor cult, and hence certain limitations have been imposed in the selection of material and its interpretation. There will, for example, be no analysis of the role of cattle in the economic life of Ngoni families and villages. Much of the material discussed has an economic significance which is immediately apparent, but the limitations set will not allow the economic implications of certain practices to be pursued further here. It is important for the main purpose of this chapter to make a brief analysis of some factors in the ownership, care, and use of cattle, and to follow that with references to some of the values and attitudes inherent in the Ngoni ownership and use of cattle. I made a preliminary analysis of these factors in a memorandum on standards of living in the central kingdom, published

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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Cattle in the ancestor cult

The Ngoni, unlike the Swazi as described by Dr. Kuper,[1] had no clear ideas about the life after death as lived by their immediate ancestors with whom they had associated in their lifetime. They did not, as the Swahi did, picture them living somewhere surrounded with cattle and other familiar creatures and objects. The importance of bringing the spirit back (*ukubuyisa idlozi*) to the house where it would be cared for signified two main things for them. The first was the continuous association of the spirit of the dead with the living persons in the community to which he had belonged, through the individuals belonging to the house, the actual hut where the sacrificial vessels were kept, and the cattle which belonged to the house. The other significant point was that contact with the returned spirit, and through him with the spirits of more remote ancestors, could only be established in the village containing the cattle of the house to which the dead man had belonged.

We shall be examining some aspects of the ritual of addressing the ancestral spirits in a later chapter of this section. Here we shall establish three constituent parts of the ancestor cult in which cattle were essential links between those taking part in the cult and the spirits whom they addressed.

The first part was the group of ceremonies which took place at death, at the burial, at the first ritual shaving and at bringing back the spirit. A text by Lopati Nzunga (see Chapter IV, p. 200) illustrates how three parts of a beast—the skin, the kidney fat (*nseso*) and the gall bladder (*nyongo*)—were considered essential for Ngoni burial. It was interesting to find in Blantyre among educated Ngoni who were Christians and occupied clerical and commercial posts, that they had given up the cow-skin for wrapping the corpse and substituted a coffin. But they admitted confidentially that in most Ngoni funerals the use of the *nseso* and the *nyongo* was customary. After the burial the ritual shaving, shared in by all who attended the funeral, was accompanied by the killing of a beast and the consumption of its meat, though with no ritual significance beyond its association with the purification of the mourners and their integration as a group. From six to twelve months later the second shaving and the bringing back of the spirit was also accompanied by killing a beast and eating its meat. These ceremonies expressed the sense of loss felt for the human person who had died, the sorrow of the mourners, their successive acts of purification which served to bring them together, and the final bringing of the spirit to live among them again. As we have seen, each stage of the death and mourning rites was accompanied by the eating of a beast or the use of certain parts of a beast. The cattle of the house to which the dead person belonged were used to bury him or her, to strengthen the mourners, and to reintegrate the spirit with the living community.

[1] Kuper, H. *An African Aristocracy*, p. 186.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

UMkulumqango or other names for the High God were rare. When questioned they said that such a High God existed and the spirits knew him, but they, the living, did not. The Ngoni phrase, *asiyazi*, 'we do not know', and its Nyanja version, *sitingadziwa*, 'we cannot know', were constantly on their lips in discussions on this topic. Among Christians like Cibambo as well as non-Christians like Nzunga, their interest in the ancestor cult was part of maintaining their identity as Ngoni. The neighbouring tribes had other forms of ancestor cults but the Ngoni form brought from the south was distinctive, and many of the concepts and practices were known to the South-eastern Bantu peoples.

The ritual for a new ancestral spirit

The Ngoni believed that at the moment of death the spirit left the body. If a sick person fell into a coma and was unconscious for a long time they said that the person had died when the coma began even though they knew he went on breathing. This happened at the death of Bambo Manga when she had periods of unconsciousness before she died. They said that her spirit had left her at the beginning of the last long coma, even though they knew from her pulse and breathing that she was not dead. At the parting of the spirit from the body they had to care for both, in order that the new ancestral spirit might be happy and in the right relationship with the living. Equal importance was attached to caring for the spirit and to caring for the corpse, since the correct performance of ritual had deep significance for the dead and for the living.

When the spirit left the body it was believed to go to the bush at the outskirts of the village where the person had been accustomed to go to relieve himself. Between the death of Bambo Manga and the burial, each morning before it was light, the men marched with a dancing step up the path to the bush where she was wont to go, singing a war song dating from trans-Zambesi days which was sung at the sending out of the *impi*. Marching to the bush and singing the war song was one step in bringing the spirit back or, more correctly perhaps, keeping in touch with it so that it should not go too far away. This approach to the spirit between the death and burial was the first of three ritual acts, each called 'bringing back the spirit'. The other two occurred after the first and second ritual shaving.

The preparation of the corpse for burial has been described in the first chapter of this section. Those features of Ngoni burial were considered essential for the welfare of the spirit, and were carried out in the majority of funerals which I witnessed, whether the dead person was a Christian or not. An account of the burial of a leading *mukumuzana* in the northern kingdom who was a Christian, given to me by another Christian Ngoni and confirmed by some of the missionaries present at the funeral, emphasized all the distinctive Ngoni elements: the round

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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grave with the little shelf at one side, the corpse wrapped in a cow-skin, the *naeso* and *nyongo* on the neck and forehead, the bent legs and upright sitting position facing south-east, and washing the face of the corpse at the grave side with a bunch of grass. On this occasion the Ngoni form of burial was followed by the Christian burial service after the grave had been filled in. During the digging of the grave hymns set to the tunes of Ngoni war songs were sung by the onlookers until the body was brought out of the house. After that there was complete silence while the corpse was lowered into the grave and the grave was filled up, until the service began. This combination of Christian and Ngoni ritual I witnessed many times. One of the missions set its face against the use of the cow-skin and declared that no Christian could be buried except in a coffin, but even this was sometimes disregarded and the full Ngoni ritual was carried out, followed by a Christian service.

After the body had been put in the grave and when the first calling back of the spirit from the bush had reminded the living that they had to care for this new spirit, a series of further duties faced them. These have been referred to as the first and second shaving. The first shaving we shall consider later as a necessary purification before eating the meat of the funeral rites which brought back the spirit right into the village. The second shaving, which took place from six to twelve months after the funeral, was the prelude to the time when the new ancestral spirit came, or was brought back, to its final lodging. The importance of this last rite was emphasized by Lopati Nzunga in his account of the ritual which took place at the tomb put up to the memory of Gomani I (see p. 165) When the building of the tomb under the supervision of Ngoni in the area was finished, many leading Ngoni from all parts, including those from the towns, gathered there for two days. Every morning before dawn they went up the forest paths singing war songs, as they did later at the time of the death of Bambo Manga, to call back the spirit from the bush where it had spent some thirty years. After a Christian service held by the tomb, the Ngoni *alumuzana* 'brought back' the spirit to Lizulu, Gomani I's village, to the house of NaMagagula his big wife. She was a Christian, so could not take the care of the spirit in her hut, but another of the widows of Gomani I, NaNsambi, who was in the house of NaMagagula, was chosen as guardian. Earlier in the proceedings, when they had decided that the tomb was going to be built, a diviner was consulted, the spirits were addressed in the kraal, the cattle showed that they agreed, and a beast from the herd of the house of NaMagagula was sacrificed and the meat offered to the ancestral spirits of the Maseko Paramounts. Then they built a new hut for NaNsambi and put in it new sacrificial vessels. When the spirit of Gomani I was finally brought home it was to this hut and guardianship that it came. They were uncertain about what had happened to the spirit in the thirty years interval and it did not seem advisable to probe

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
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It was the fathers who decided at what age a child should go to school, and having once enrolled the boy or girl and paid the fees, the fathers insisted on regular attendance. 593 [872]

All Ngoni fathers showed affection for their young children, some consistently and others when it occurred to them. They picked them up and carried them about, held their hand while they tried their first steps, listened to their attempts to speak correctly, held them in their arms when they sat on the veranda. In one village twin boys aged four were devoted to their father and he to them. When he walked about, he held a hand of each. When he sat on the veranda they were always beside him and he had an arm round each. When he was elsewhere, the twins wandered about the compound disconsolately, hand in hand, rejecting the advances of their nurse girls and uncertain what to do until he appeared again.

Ngoni fathers had to be consulted in cases of sickness when the grandmother's remedies had failed and specialist help was needed. Then the father and his brothers and their father decided whether to summon a diviner or a herbalist, and arranged for the throwing of lots or the search for 'medicines', and paid the agreed fee when the cure worked. 593 757

It was part of Ngoni tradition to keep the knowledge of death away from young children. The father was held responsible for seeing that his children were kept away from the hut where the corpse was awaiting burial, and from the funeral itself. When men and women of leading Ngoni families were buried at the edge of the kraal, and the fence enlarged so that the cattle stamped over the grave, the explanation given (though it was not the only reason) was that 'the young children should not know or fear death in this village'. 593 764 858

The physical surroundings of the small child

The two diagrams, overleaf, illustrate the layout of the hut and compound in typical Ngoni households. Some of these 342 351

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

754 695 791 [795] human flesh-eaters may have worn, the doctor takes home with him and washes his poison bark with it, that it may still retain its virtue. In the case of a man who dies from drinking the poison, his spirit is not brought back to the village, but is driven out into the bush.

II

A FUNERAL

● 764 I. When a person dies every one is told that so and so, who was ill, is "finished for." Then the village elders come together and go into his hut. They begin to bathe the body and anoint it with oil, folding the knees against the chest, and laying the palms of the hands against the cheeks, the arms being bent from the elbows. Then they take a large flat stone, set it against the hut wall, and on it place the body in a sitting position. Then they commence to wail, the women folk only are in the hut where the corpse is, the men are outside, and the children on the verandah. They lament, saying, "Alas, alas, my husband, what shall I do this day?" [The women pass the night in the hut with the dead body, the men sleep outside.] Next morning, when it is dawn, some men take their hoes, and sacrificial flour, and go to some resting-place on the wayside, and sprinkle some flour at the foot of a tree, and set out again, and when now they are drawing near the burial ground, the one who is in front picks up a stone and throws it, with the words, "We have passed." Then they commence to clear a piece of ground, and take the flour and mark out the grave.

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

When they have finished doing so, one old man comes forward and turns up a little of the soil at each end of the grave, while the rest then begin to dig. People at a funeral do not fear each other; should they wish to abuse one another they just do so. When they have finished digging the grave, a person getting in is invisible. The reason they dig a deep hole is that they fear the eaters of human flesh, lest they should lift out the corpse should it be [lit. from] close to the surface. Then they take the blade of grass which they have measured the body with, and measure the cave, which they now dig inwards on one side of the grave, and throw out the earth to form this space. When this is finished, some of the old men come to have a look at the work. The two men who now remain in the grave (to await the corpse) are the chief mourners, whose duty it will be to divide out the mourning feast to their fellows.

II. They who go to bring the body now set out, uttering the funeral wail. And all the people who remained behind at the village come together and congregate at the hut, and they enter and lift up the body. A mat is spread at the doorway and the body set down upon it; they lift it from there, and make a circuit of all the huts the man used to frequent when alive, and they take him also to the village court, and set him down there. On lifting him from there, they go to the burial ground. When they arrive at the accustomed halting-place for travellers, the corpse is again set down, and then they come with it to the grave. On the way to the burial ground they who carry the household goods and mats of the deceased go first. And the people take turns in carrying the body. When they come to the grave, they hand down the body to the two men who remained in it. They strip off his calico,

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

764 and take a large flat stone and set the corpse on it, and take a millstone and place it on his head. If it be he has children, they are made to take charcoal in their hands, and this they cast into the grave (this is to cause them to forget). Then some old man takes up a hoe, and strikes the ground at one side of the grave and again at the other, when many begin to fill in the earth, the chief mourners trampling it down.

III. When they have finished filling in, they knock out the hoe heads, and set off for the stream. They who carry the hoes and household belongings of the deceased go first. When they reach the water, the chief mourners bathe first, then every one else; the men bathe up-stream, the women down-stream. They do not rub each other's backs. When
768 they have finished bathing, they take the calico, sporran, and "*nsengwa*" baskets the dead man used to eat out of, and set fire to them, and splash the ashes with water. Then they set out for the village, wailing. When they come to the grave, the medicine man looks for medicine to remove the evil
[765] influence of the spirit of the dead; [this medicine] he breaks up, puts in a potsherd, pours on water, and stirs. The chief mourner begins to rub it on his
765 legs, face, and hands, then others come and do the same. If the deceased had children of his own, they also rub some of the medicine on. They again keep wake at the hut in which the man died. Next morning at dawn the nearest relation of the dead
[431] takes goats and fowls and gives them to the chief mourners, who then begin to shave a little patch of hair from the side of each person's head, when the people will then shave each other quite bald. The widows go to some spot in the bush to weave the "red" bands and to shave. When every one has quite finished shaving, the meat is taken from the

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

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Little maiden, whom war has given me,
Should you refuse to be mine,
I am as a slave in my grief,
And then what must you do?

We were far away;
Our companions had cut off their head rings.

XXVII

THE NTETEREZI DANCE

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[164]

It is danced only at a funeral.

Scrape out the beer pot and give me.
Have some sense, the beer is finished.

He is the husband who favours your companion (*i.e.* his second wife),
And you, you only cook and give him, all in silence;
And here you return,
And weep against the hut post.

Should you be a childless man,
Do not be hitting your neighbour's child,
That's so, father.
Don't you think you should go and beat that maize you planted?
That's so, father.

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

XXVIII

THE KANDENGA DANCE

In dancing this dance the women stand in line on one side, the men in a line on another, the drums are where the men are; then a woman goes and takes the knobkerry from a man, and the man goes back with her to where the women are, and again they return and stand close together. The man places one hand on the woman's shoulder, and they dance thus, and when they have done dancing the woman turns round and hands the man his knobkerry. The Kandenga is danced at a funeral, but also just for fun when the moon is shining.

A white-haired man is malt;
On his coming, let him make beer;
Yes, father.
On his coming he shall make beer.

Towards the river to *Likongwe*
A cloud shines white like some little bird, maybe,
But it's those Angoni; they always said
"That's a rich little spot where the *Nsugudzi* flows."

I am an unmarried maiden, and one of Njolo's men will be my lord,
De, de.
The youths from here think too much of themselves.
Did not one say, I was his,
De, de.
The youths of here are too conceited.

The final day of the proceedings, *teilu la kumusu*, is known as *teilu la kumutu mukiru*. The beer is tasted at cockcrow, and *kuzipa mukiru* begins to dance, followed first by a *chirudzo* and then by *ndondo*. At sunrise the dancers proceed to the *dambwe*, and those who play no further active part may go and bathe, after which they repair to the *liunde*, where they rest and drink till noon. Meanwhile, the relations, accompanied by any other of the men who assisted in digging the grave or were present at the interment, have betaken themselves early to the banks of the stream where they bathed on the former occasion. The women who have worn *zisthando* burn them in a fire, and scatter the ashes. If they have indulged in sexual intercourse while wearing them, the *zisthando* refuse to burn. Both sexes bathe separately as before, and all return to the house of the deceased, outside which the men shave each others' heads, as also do the women. About noon one or more *amalipa* come from the *liunde* and dance in the *mzinda*. *Chadzunda* hobbles out, peers round the graveyard, and goes first to the house of the deceased to receive a *supo* from the widow and then to the house of the headman, where he sits on a chair while people come and give him *masupo* and beer. After this refreshment he dances in the *bwalo*, and then retreats to the *liunde* for a rest, returning to dance a second and third time before retiring finally to the *dambwe*. Then *kuzipa mukiru* dances for the last time, and is taken to the *dambwe* and burnt, and those who have handled him bathe. *Viundzo* again bring broken pots from the graveyard, and dance with them in the bush, singing "*Mbipa zadondo*," and the *amalipa* continue dancing for a while. At sunset the ceremonies are ended by the male relations of the deceased burning first the beer fence and then the house. The widow sleeps in someone else's house for a few weeks, until a new house has been built for her by her relations.

5. *Funeral rites* (*Ngoni*).

The procedure described by Captain Rattray[2] in 1907 is still remembered by the old men; but the younger Angoni are inclined to follow the customs of the Achewa with certain modifications. For example, they place the corpse in a recess cut out from the bottom of the wall of the grave in order that it may not be soiled when the grave is filled in. They do not leave him any food, but place his spear and shield and one or two of his knives in the recess by his side. Part of his remaining property is deposited in the main shaft; but the sons always inherit the knives, except the *chipumbu* (knife for cutting meat), which falls to the head wife.

On the second day after the death, the widows send children to cut *mpalapalasa* grass, from which they weave *zisthando* to bind on their heads. As long as the widows wear these *zisthando*, they must abstain from sexual intercourse; if they fail from grace, they invariably remove the *zisthando* first. They must also keep their hands behind their backs when walking abroad, and may only use one hand when gesticulating. They must refrain from conversation and ablution for two or three weeks, at the end of which they brew beer (known as *mese wa zisebidzi*) and invite a few friends to partake of it. Very often a widow's near female relations past the time of childbearing wear *zisthando* and observe prohibitions in sympathy with her.

[1] Mourning bands of plaited grass (see following section).

[2] "Some Folk Lore Songs and Stories in Chinyanja," pp. 98-99.

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Maravi FR4

On the second day, also, the *mwini malire* takes cows or a goat according to his means, and divides the flesh among the mourners. The bones may not be gnawed, as this would be considered equivalent to eating the dead man, but they are put into an *nguombo* basket and thrown away into the bush at the end of the feast.

On the third and fourth days the male relations surround the grave with a fence of *tsekera* grass known as *chilira*, which is sometimes plastered by the women with mud. The Achewa are now beginning to imitate this custom, and also that of wearing *zisthamba*. Both tribes plant *mkhadzi*[1] trees about the graves in order that the dead may have shade.

A chief is not buried in the common graveyard, but in the village just outside his hut, and a chair is sometimes placed inside the *chilira*. One of his senior relations kills a goat, and the new prospective chief ties a root along the handle and blade of a knife, with which he cuts a horizontal strip of skin round the quarters of a goat, and wears the strip for two or three months as a belt, the tail hanging down behind. With the same knife the widows cut off the false hoofs together with a small piece of adjacent skin, through which they thread a string, and then bind a false hoof on each wrist and wear them till the end of the period of mourning. The root must remain fastened to the knife throughout this period, at the end of which all are burnt together.

VIII.—MENTAL CHARACTERS.

1. *Reincarnation and Spirits (Chewa).*

Mizimu or spirits are invoked as intermediaries between man and God (*Chauta*), and each village contains a hut for the spirits of past chiefs, to whom prayers are generally made because they are powerful and because they are known to everybody. Some of the larger villages have two huts, one for the spirits of men and the other for the spirits of women. A man may also make offerings to the spirits of his own family in his own hut. When the green maize is ready for eating, the people may not taste it until their headman has taken a cob, cooked it in his house and placed it in the spirits' house, where he claps his hands and thanks the spirits for the crop. The cob, like other offerings to spirits, may be eaten next morning by children below the age of initiation.

If, as frequently happens, a traveller strays—as we should say, absentmindedly—when following a route which he knows quite well, it is the work of a spirit which has been annoyed by him. On one such occasion a police constable of mine, who had been sent to the neighbouring station while his child was ill, found himself wandering several times from the main road, and knew thereby that his child was dead, and that its spirit was troubling him because he should

[1] *Mkhadzi*, euphorbia. These are evergreen, quickly propagated and long lived, and so they serve also as a sign to mark the grave long afterwards. In the Mlanje District the Anyanja and other tribes sometimes plant them in maize fields because they are supposed to be obnoxious to termites.

Livingstone, *loc. cit.*, p. 105, writes that in the Shire Highlands in 1859 they found all Mang'anja villages surrounded by an impenetrable hedge of poisonous euphorbia. He continues: "This tree casts a deep shade, which would render it difficult to bowmen to take aim at the villagers inside. The grass does not grow beneath it, and this may be the reason why it is so universally used, for when dry the grass would convey fire to huts inside; moreover, the hedge acts as a fender to all flying sparks.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

PLATE XVI

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7. Drying a cow-hide at a funeral. A beast from the herd of the dead man has been killed for the mourners. The skin will be buried on top of the coffin

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8. Later, at the same funeral. The body has been interred and the mourners are sitting round the grave, near the cattle-byre, listening to a sermon by a local preacher of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission

[Facing P. 225]

Il:Lancaster G-5 (ca. 1935) 1937 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

migration about 1833; her burial place is unknown. She died without issue. She was the eldest daughter of Nombhengula, who was a brother of Ziwide and Sigode, and a son of Langa Vimba Nqumayo. She was a cousin to Manukusa, son of Sigode, and to Nompetu, daughter of Ziwide, who married Matshobana, the father of Mzilikazi. Sometimes it happens that a great wife or other major wife is not blessed with children. In these cases another woman is placed in her "house" with the object of raising seed to it. The children resulting are looked upon as children of the establishment in which their mother was "placed" and are in the same position as if born to the major wife; the eldest son of a chief's "Great Wife" inherits the chieftainship of the tribe on the death of his father. This was, and is, the custom of the Ngoni; it is also known to the Achewa and Ansenga Tribes. This custom is known to the Ngoni as *Nshlanze*.

Zongendaba therefore took as *Nshlanze* Sosera Nqumayo, a younger sister of Loziwawa, and by her he had issue as follows:—Ntutu Mpezeni, the eldest son, "the Inkosana of the Indhlunkulu," Jadose, Mtwalalichi, and Ndhlohvu Makekevu. Sosera was born about 1808 near St. Lucia Bay. She migrated with the chief and followed him through all his wanderings until his death, after which she accompanied her son and heir, Ntutu Mpezeni, into what is now the Fort Jameson district. There she settled in her village called "Dingeni," where she died in 1900 and was buried near the site of the old village of Mtenguleni Uka Sosera close to the Kakolo stream; her grave is now marked by an euphorbia tree. The site is on the farm owned by Major Jefferies, O.B.E., which prior to the invasion of the Ngoni used to be the land of the Achewa chief, Kampara.

Sosera is well remembered by many natives who are living to-day, and although she died at a great age it is said that she was in possession of her full faculties until the last. She is described as being a real chieftainess and it is said that in later years if annoyed by the younger generation she would lay about her with her *mchizi* (staff) in a lusty manner. Many amusing tales are told of her astuteness and dry humour.

After Zongendaba's death, Sosera chose for a very beautiful woman, named Nthonane, who was a young sister-wife to the house and who had borne no children, one, Sawasa Mazunko, as a seed raiser, for which he received twenty head of cattle. A daughter was born and named Ndawiri Jere; she now resides in the Fort Manning District of Nyasaland and from her this information was obtained. Ndawiri looked upon Ntutu Mpezeni as her brother, and Ndawiri was, and is, looked upon as one of Zongendaba's children. She married Ndawombi, since dead, and has one son, Ndawombi Hara.

It is agreed by the old indunas that Ntutu Mpezeni would have been about nine years of age when he crossed over the Zambesi, that he was carried across as befitted a Paramount Chief's heir, that, prior to the crossing, Zongendaba had given him a little shield and an assegai, and that he had killed his first duiker buck before the crossing. This is also borne out by the sons of Zimakazi Lavu Ngoma and Ngandu Mbawa, both of whose fathers were set the task of being servants to the chief's heir in his youth.